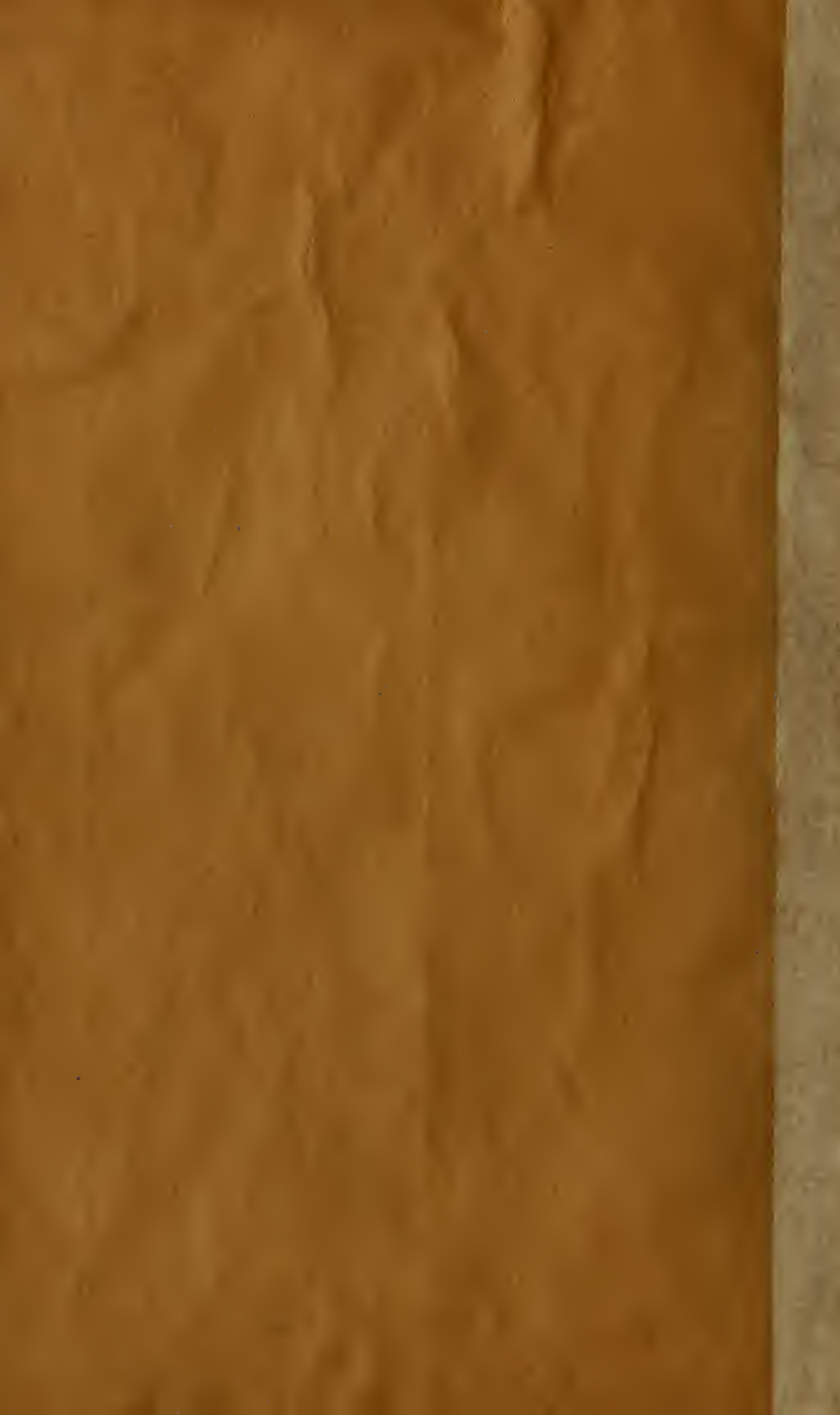


MANIFESTO
ON
CUBAN AFFAIRS
ADDRESSED
TO THE
PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES,
BY
AMBROSIO JOSÉ GONZALES,
SEPTEMBER 1st, 1852.

New Orleans :
PRINTED AT THE DAILY DELTA, 112 POYDRAS STREET.

1853.



MANIFESTO

ON

CUBAN AFFAIRS

ADDRESSED

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES,

BY

AMBROSIO JOSÉ GONZALES,

SEPTEMBER 1st, 1852.

New Orleans :

PRINTED AT THE DAILY DELTA, 112 POYDRAS STREET.

1853.

F1784
G63

54685

11-10454

MANIFESTO ON CUBAN AFFAIRS

ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

Of all the foreign questions which, for some years past, have fallen under the observation of the American people, there is none so little understood, and so deserving of their special consideration as that involving the independence of Cuba—an island whose close proximity, controlling position, domestic institutions and commercial wants, bring home to the safety, the peace, the welfare and development of America, all incidents likely to bear upon her future destinies. It is, therefore, meet that her claims receive a proper attention,—that the acts of her sons and their American coadjutors, being properly appreciated, misrepresentation be silenced, and public opinion be righted where it has been misled. With this view I have undertaken to give a synopsis of the causes which in Cuba have led to dissatisfaction and open rebellion; to advert to the character of the Cuban movements in this country, and of the persons connected with them, as far as the despotism, which still weighs upon that island, may render it prudent; and to unfold, in self-vindication, the double-dealing arts of our detractors. This step I would have taken months ago, but for negotiations then pending with Spain, involving the liberty of American citizens. Thus, a duty to my country, and to the integrity of Cubans, and of distinguished Americans, assailed by the sycophants of power, must be my excuse for placing my name before the people.

The thirteen colonies of North America rebelled against Great Britain for encroachments upon the granted rights of their citizens, and made a duty on tea and a paper impost the occasion for general rising. Owing to their position upon a mighty continent, and on the borders of a vast wilderness, they effected their emancipation, with the timely aid of monarchical European governments. Cuba, knowing no rights, and groaning under oppressions a thousand times more galling, has sought the individual aid of a neighboring republican people, heirs to the liberties won by the colonies, and to the destiny they were called to fulfil. Her claim to this aid is based upon the following grievances:—With a population of 550,000 whites, and 600,000 blacks—about that of Virginia—she pays in taxes and imposts the sum of twenty odd millions of dollars, or nearly forty dollars per head of her white population, irrespective of the innumerable predatory exactions of the swarm of officials, high and low, sent from Spain to enrich themselves with the substance of our people. The English pay, on an average, \$12 33, the Spaniards, \$9; the French, \$7 50; the American people, \$2 39. In order to support an army of twenty thousand regulars, four thousand drilled militia, an armed police or gendarmerie, and a naval force of four or five frigates, six steamers, one sloop, two or three brigs, and ten or twelve smaller vessels of war, with occasionally the Spanish ship of the line—all indispensable to enforce such a tyranny—and to bear the expenses of the Court of Spain and the interest on her English loan, the Cuban people are made to pay \$10 50 per barrel on imported American flour, from 50 to 200 per cent. duty on the original cost of rice, salt fish, corn, hogs for slaughter, and other necessities of life. Bread is thus placed entirely beyond the reach of the poorer classes. By valuing some articles double or treble their original price,—salt fish, for instance, which has a nominal duty of thirty-three per cent., really pays, on importation, sixty-six per cent. So with flour, rice, corn, &c. Indigenous fruits pay an export duty of from six to seven per cent.

Planters pay an export duty on sugar of two and a half per cent., and all agricultural productions ten per cent. when gathered. Live stock pays the same duty exclusive of that of exportation. The poor man pays \$1.25 per bushel of salt, (about one hundred weight,) so indispensable in our warm climate. The Cuban pays from six to six and a half per cent. on the value of any slave, town or rural property which he may dispose of, besides the heavy charges of notaries, registration, stamp paper, &c., whereby it vanishes into the government hands after a few sales. Stamp paper, the use of which is enforced by authority, is sold by the government at prices ranging from fifty cents to eight dollars per sheet; and a man must swear to utter destitution to pay but six and a quarter cents per sheet. If from these, among other unparalleled exactions, which check a development and progress as essential to nations as to individuals, we turn our eyes to the oppressions which completely destroy the intellectual, moral and physical well-being of the people, what do we see? The government, instead of fostering education, discountenances it at home and abroad. In Cuba, with her immense taxation, only one child in every eighteen is taught how to read and write, and for this pitiful result is she chiefly indebted to individual exertions. About the year 1826, a Spanish war frigate was sent to the United States by Ferdinand the Seventh, to take back to the Island such Cubans as were then receiving their education at the North. Orders were issued from Spain in 1849, prohibiting the education of our youths in the United States, and they have accordingly to plead ill-health in order to obtain a passport to this country. Cuba has not the shadow of political representation. In 1836, her three deputies were refused their seats in the Spanish Cortes by the peninsular members, called to that Congress by the very law which prescribed the election of our representatives. She is now held as a conquered province, not as the land bequeathed to us by our fathers, who toiled in its settlement, and gave it to usefulness and civilization. The Cuban is, moreover, deprived of all liberty of conscience, of speech, or of the press. The life, the property, the honor itself, of the inhabitants is at the mercy of the Captain-General, who, by a royal decree, dated May 28, 1825, and still in force, is invested with—

“All the powers which, by royal ordinances, are granted to the governors of besieged cities. In consequence thereof,” adds the royal mandate, “his Majesty confers upon your Excellency the most ample and unbounded power, not only to separate from the Island persons, whatever their condition rank, class, or occupation, whose permanency therein your Excellency may deem obnoxious, or whose conduct public, or private, may alarm you, replacing them with servants faithful to his Majesty, and deserving of all the confidence of your Excellency, but also to suspend the execution of any ordinance whatsoever, or general provision, concerning any branch of the administration, as your Excellency may think most conducive to the interests of the royal service.”

This authority, superseding the law itself, has no parallel in any country. In Cuba, three persons cannot collect together, without being instantly dispersed. Cubans cannot assemble to discuss their interests, nor even to petition for relief. The Common Council of Mantanzas was severely dealt with in 1845, for having remonstrated with the Supreme Court in regard to excesses committed by the soldiery against peaceable citizens of that place. A conspiracy was urged by Gen. O'Donnell, during his administration of the island, and hundreds of innocent colored people were butchered or tortured to death, at Guines, Cardenas and Matanzas, that the Governor and his satellites might receive from Spain their rewards in titles and crosses. The slave trade is carried on for the special benefit of the Queen Mother, the Captain-General, and a powerful Spanish clique at Havana. Count Alcoy made in less than a year \$200,000 in importation fees of 3000 slaves, at \$51 per head. Through this horrid traffic, declared piracy by existing treaties, and secretly connived at by the cabinet of Madrid, it is estimated that over half a million of human beings have been imported into Cuba since 1826, when Mr. John Quincy Adams, the philanthropic President of the United States, effectually broke up, at the Congress of Panama, a concerted plan between Cuba and the republics of Columbia and Mexico, for the liberation of the former, then, as now, not only a mart for African captives, but the point d'appui for European despotism in America—furnishing the arsenal, the conclave, and the treasury, from which expeditions have been started, intrigues have been plotted, and money supplied to attack and invade Hispano-American republics, prop up the lingering monarchical

party therein, and insidiously undermine American influence, and prejudice American interests, as is the case in Mexico at this very day. While slaves and Asiatics are thus introduced, white colonization is discountenanced, that the threat of a colored population may be held to the Cubans, while 24,000 bayonets are pointed at their breast. The Cubans have not even the idea of a trial by jury. Cases are tried before the Judges of royal appointment, the venal favorites of the Spanish Court, who are speedily removed to make room for more hungry aspirants. The Captain-General himself, a mere soldier, presides, by law, over the Supreme Court of Justice. All offices, with the exception of a few of the lowest order, are in the hands of Spaniards. The law and the medical profession being over-stocked, and the former under the pervading influence of a corrupt system, Cubans of high intelligence and education, every avenue of distinction and emolument being closed to them, are constrained to discharge the duty of overseers to planters, machinists, &c., in order to earn a livelihood. Enlightenment is invariably with the Cuban a sufficient cause for suspicion, annoyance, and persecution. He is forbidden to carry arms. A fruit-knife is not allowed him. Even walking-canes, which from their size, cannot pass through a ring in the hands of sentinels at the gates of Havana, are seized and broken. The penalty for carrying weapons of any description is six years hard labor in the chain gangs of the penal colonies of Africa. The Cuban cannot have company at home without a permit, for which he must pay two dollars and a half, and he must be provided with a license, at the same cost, if he is to absent himself from town or from his home in the country. Neither can he change his domicile without notifying the police, obtaining a permit, and paying for the same. He cannot lodge any person, whether foreigner or native, stranger, friend, or relative, in his house, without previous notice to the police. He cannot be out after ten o'clock at night, unless he carries a lantern testifying that he is abroad. Mayors of cities are not elected by the people, but by the aldermen of the common councils, and under the dictation of the Spanish Governors. These aldermen serve for life, and their offices are either inherited, or purchased from the crown at public auction, for prices varying according to the perquisites thereof. Thus, it happens that even they who should be the immediate guardians of the people, often become speculators, who, far from extending them protection, extort the full interest of the capital invested in the purchase of their offices. A permanent military tribunal, (comision militar), tries all criminal offences beyond the limits of the city, and all disloyalty to the Spanish Government. It is summary in its proceedings, and its unheard-of tyranny has been well exemplified in the case of John S. Thrasher. No affidavit is required in Cuba, but a suspicion or a secret denunciation, to tear a man from the bosom of his family, at any hour of the day or night, throw him into a dungeon, there to linger for weeks or months, if it so please the authorities, and then set him free with the bare acknowledgment of his innocence, or send him to transatlantic exile, if though innocent he still remains suspicious.

Such is our government. A hideous compound of base rapacity, wanton insult, and dire oppression. And to this government, worse than the tyrannic rule of Austria, are we to be subjected, because Cuba is, forsooth, a fertile spot, a desirable position that England covets monarchs protect for Spain, and her sons cannot disenthral by unassisted efforts! And this is to be the Lombardy and the Constantinople of this continent, the arena for despotic princes or ambitious cabinets to contend upon, unless the sturdy arm of America check at once this evil tendency of events.

None, I hope, will deny that our people have done much of what was possible for them to do, under the adverse circumstances in which they are placed, to attain the blessings of liberty. Men may talk of the revolutionary heroes of America, and ask why we have not commanded the success which they obtained. They should first compare their situation with ours. They, from the beginning, were free, enlightened, and linked by the spirit of association. We have ever been enslaved, bred in ignorance, and kept apart by the Machiavelian policy of disunion. They held a vast continent, and were surrounded by the wilderness. We inhabit an island, without the possibility of retreat for ourselves, or of access for our friends, without manifold dangers and excessive cost. They had a militia, were used to arms, and held them in their hands. We have no military force deserving of the name, are unacquainted with the use of firearms, and can neither carry nor possess them. They, with three millions of inhabitants,

had scarcely any English troops among them. We, with but half a million, have quartered in our midst twenty-four thousand bayonets. They met, discussed, and resolved, printed and spoke and went about freely and unshackled. We cannot do one of these things. Our movements are watched, our thoughts are scanned, our very servants are hired by the oppressor to denounce us. They had on their side the fleets and armies of France, the chivalry of Europe, the financial aid of Spain, and the moral countenance of all nations. We have against us not only Spain, but that very France and England, and the menace of the blacks, the squadrons of the United States, and the denunciation of the republican government as pirates and freebooters, to draw from our feet our only plank of support, with the world against us; the moral aid of this free country. We have had, it is true, and this is for the future our rainbow of promise, the encouragement, the aid, and the gallant devotion of very many of the generous citizens of this republic; but of what avail they could be against the leaning of their own government towards European policy, events have clearly shown.

Since 1825, revolutionary clubs have existed in Cuba, under the name of Soles de Bolivar, and other designations. Conspiracies have succeeded each other, and arrests, imprisonments, banishments, and executions have invariably followed in their wake. The act of the Spanish Cortes, in 1836, denying the right of the Cuban Deputies to seats therein, gave the first impulse to the car of revolution. Narciso Lopez, the hero of our infant history, a Venezuelan by birth, a Cuban by adoption and affection, then the Governor of Madrid, a Major-General in the Spanish army, and a Senator in the Spanish Cortes for the province of Seville, resolved from that very day to throw his military experience, his lofty gallantry, republican principles, untiring energies, and iron will into the scale of Cuban freedom. He accordingly resigned his high position, and came to Cuba in the Company of his friend, Don Gerouimo Valdes, appointed to the Captain-Generalacy of that Island. As long as that functionary was in power Gen. Lopez abstained, out of considerations of friendship, from revolutionary steps. He held, during his administration, the post of Civil and Military Governor of the central province of Cuba, and was also President of the Supreme Military Tribunal (*comision militar*.) On the removal of Valdes, Gen. Lopez, no longer in office, applied himself to the work he had been preparing in his mind. The revolution of 1848, which brought about the emancipation of the blacks in the French Antilles, opened the eyes of the more indolent and supine of the Cuban planters to the dangers which beset them on all sides from the abolition policy of England and France; they joined the more patriotic ones of their own class, and with the mass of Cubans who dreamed of liberty for liberty's sake, formed the revolutionary party of which Gen. Lopez naturally became the leader. The services of a man of his qualities, of his military position, and popularity with the army, was, in the face of a military despotism, an important acquisition to the cause. The American army had, at this juncture, conquered Mexico. From Scott and Taylor to the merest private, laurels had been won which the Cubans would fondly have interwoven with the leaves of their palms. A host of braves awaited under arms the orders to disband and return to their homes. The opportunity presented itself of obtaining the aid of 5000 Americans to the impending Cuban revolution, when no longer in the service of their country. Among the Generals under the orders of Scott, W. J. Worth seemed to combine the qualities of head and heart—as he possessed the gallantry and the chivalry of the Bayard of the American army—requisite for the acceptance of this noble trust and its successful execution. He was, consequently, approached, at Jalapa, by Cuban delegates. The impression made upon me in conversations with those most directly connected with this subject is, that he accepted their propositions, contingent upon his resignation of his rank in the army. But, be this as it may, the troops were not disbanded in Mexico, as had been anticipated, and nothing could have been done while they were in the pay of the United States. About this time Gen Lopez's conspiracy was discovered, and he, together with some distinguished Cubans, had to seek refuge in the United States, against the extreme penalty of the Spanish laws. The frustration of all our plans, through the sleepless vigilance of the Spanish authorities, the paucity of our resources at home, the unbounded means of our oppressors, and the emigration of Gen. Lopez, the head and front of the movement, to the United States, made it evident that the revolution could not be then successfully commenced in Cuba. In fact, in a certain manner, it was already in the United

States, where most of the intelligence, the courage, and the determination then were, which constituted its very embodiment. It was, therefore, necessary to bring it back to Cuba, like Minerva, steel-clad and panoplied, there to run through its subsequent stages. This is the key to our whole movement, and this it is that they should bear in mind who undertake to sit as judges of our actions. The undersigned was, under these circumstances, sent to the United States as a commissioner to Generals Lopez and Worth, as well as to some Cuban patriots residing in this country. Gen. Worth accepted the eventual command of an American army, which was to act in support of a small force, headed, in advance, by Gen. Lopez. For the raising of these expeditions, \$3,000,000 were to be contributed by Cuba. A member of Gen. Worth's military family, a gentleman of high standing and social position, was requested by me to go to Cuba, and see for himself into the state of affairs. He returned, satisfied with the ability of the persons connected with the movement to carry out their promises, and was furnished by them with such plans of cities and fortifications as Gen. Worth was desirous to possess. These facts at once set forth the character of the undertaking, and show it to have been in the hands of men of wealth, position, and responsibility; for how could otherwise a man of Gen. Worth's high honor and renown—how could the lamented Duncan and other equally distinguished officers of the American army—have given it their countenance, and even engaged in preparations for it, had it not received the approbation of their judgment, the encouragement of their Americanism, and the sanction of their integrity? The election of Gen. Taylor to the Presidency of the U. States was a severe blow to the hopes of my countrymen, as they conceived that his party would oppose any change in their political condition. The death in Texas of the generous soldier who hesitated not to imperil his life and military reputation in the effort to achieve the complement of American liberty, cast an additional gloom over their political aspirations. Those who had risked themselves, mainly from dread of the emancipation of slavery, seeing that matters were not immediately menacing, drew back, and, together with the few who still hoped for concessions from Spain, declined further action; always ready, however, to profit by the sacrifices of the more consistent ones, in case their movement should prove successful. Under the influence of this reaction the means could not well be had for an expedition on a large scale; but on the other hand, the revolutionary spirit had visibly progressed among the masses, and from all accounts received from the island, a smaller force than Worth required was deemed adequate for the enterprise. Gen. Lopez, always unswerving and indefatigable when the liberty of Cuba was at stake, applied himself, in 1849, conjointly with his friends in the States, to the raising of 1200 men, intended as a nucleus for our population to rally around. A portion of it was collected on Round Island, in the Gulf of Mexico, the remainder was to sail from New York.

The transports for this force were the steamship *Fanny*, purchased in New Orleans, the propeller *Sea Gull*, purchased, and the steamship *New Orleans*, chartered in New York for the purpose. This is the first and the largest expedition raised in this country for the liberation of Cuba, and it is as worthy of remark, as it is meet to keep in mind, that of the \$80,000 with which, according to Gen. Lopez' estimate, it was gotten up, not one solitary cent was procured or contributed by Americans. The whole was Cuban money, raised entirely by voluntary donations among the patriots in the United States, and in the fatherland. Here is, then, the incontrovertible fact that the nucleus of the Cuban revolution—the leadership, most of the courage, the intelligence, the spirit, the energy, the will, and the means, which constituted its very essence—though originating in Cuba and though Cuban in its nature and its object, was then in the United States, and was from the United States to be reinstated upon its native soil. This state of things cannot be attributable to Cubans or Americans, but to the despotism which ejected all these elements, and compelled them to prosper upon foreign though friendly soil. That its character commended it to respect and protection from high places is deducible from the fact that although the proclamation of Gen. Taylor was issued on the 7th of August, 1849, the *Sea Gull*, laden with arms and ammunition, and with her complement of Cubans, was permitted to remain untouched and unmolested in the harbor of New York until the earlier part of September; that, when broken up, because of the too long delay in its sailing, not one of the Cubans was arrested, and no one, Cuban or American, was tried for participating in it,—that vessels, arms and ammunition were all returned to us,—that the Washington Republic, the government organ,

published long articles, portraying the evils under which our country groaned, concluding with a significant declaration to the effect that a people who could endure such a tyranny were deserving of it. The fact that Commander Randolph was ordered to blockade Round Island, and starve the unarmed citizens encamped upon it, and that the governor and a high justice of the sovereign state of Mississippi, were, on the following year, dragged from their chairs of office by the same administration, to be tried in Louisiana, on suspicion of sympathising with Cuban liberty, only proves that some show was required in the matter, and that of all men, politicians are the most apt to profit by the risk of others, and to turn upon them the "stop thief" of lower derelictors, when success is no longer to be expected. But the antagonistic press was not satisfied with the aspect of a movement which presented no object for attack. They demanded of the leaders to show themselves, that they might become the target for their slander and vituperation. This greatly contributed to the formation of a public junta, the nature and object of which are sufficiently explained in the following announcement :

" TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD :

" The undersigned beg leave to avail themselves of your widely-distributed columns, to announce to all who may be concerned in such an announcement, that, by appointment from Gen. Narciso Lopez, well known in the United States as well as in Cuba, as the head of the late projected revolution for the liberation of that Island from the oppressions and degradation of its present condition—they have accepted and undertaken, in concert with Gen. Lopez, the duties and responsibilities of a 'patriotic junta for the promotion of the political interests of Cuba.' Without infringing on the laws of this country by the present announcement, or contemplating hereafter any action which they will not stand prepared to justify before all tribunals, human and divine, they feel that it is alike due to their cause and their country to stand forth openly to meet the responsibilities which attach to their undisguised hopes, aspirations and course ; at the same time that they are enabled to serve as a centre for correspondence, with a view to concert with the thousands of noble spirits who, in all sections of this Union, sigh to behold the slavery and sufferings of Cuba, and long to contribute any aid honorably and legitimately in their power, for her relief.

" This honorable trust, associating the undersigned for the purposes indicated, with the illustrious patriot and chief who will preside over the junta, they have accepted as a duty not to be declined, profoundly distrustful indeed of their own ability or worthiness, but supported by the conscious rectitude of their motives, and by an unhesitating confidence in the favor of Heaven and in the generous sympathies of the noble and free American people.

" Copies of the present announcement are at the same time sent to the editors of La Verdad, El Correo de los dos Mundos, Sun, and Tribune, of New York ; the Union and Republic, of Washington ; the Courier and Mercury, of Charleston ; the Chronicle, of Louisville ; the Delta and Picayune, of New Orleans ; and the editors of all other papers are respectfully requested to copy it. One of the names attached is left in blank, because the gentleman indicated is at a distance from the city, and it is not deemed proper to make it public before the reception of notice of his acceptance.

" The Junta Promovedora de los Interesses Politicos de Cuba will shortly establish itself at the City of Washington, to which city may be addressed, directly to General Lopez, (post paid) all correspondence of its friends, box 51, post office.

" With great respect, your obedient servants,

" AMBROSIO JOSE GONZALEZ,
 " JOSE SANCHEZ IZNAGA,
 " JUAN MANUEL MACIAS,
 " CIRILO VILLAVERDE."

Spain could not allow this step to pass unnoticed or unpunished. It brought upon its authors the following proceedings of the authorities of Cuba, published in the Charleston Mercury :

SENTENCE OF THE PERMANENT MILITARY COMMITTEE OF THE
COUNCIL OF WAR FOR THE ISLAND OF CUBA.

HAVANA, August 19, 1850.

In consequence of the decree of Don Fulgencio de Salas, President of the Military Executive Committee of the Island, dated 27th December, 1849, authorizing Captain Xavier Mendoza, Fiscal for said tribunal for proceedings ordered by His Excellency the Captain-General, against several individuals who had emigrated to the United States, and created at New York a Club under the title of "Junta for Promoting the Political Interests of Cuba," with the object of diffusing in this island and in Porto Rico their insidious intentions and avowed purpose of subverting public tranquillity, have been occupied, and are engaged in conspiring against the legitimate government of Her Majesty, and the following persons appear accused as members and active agents of said criminal association, namely: Ambrosio J. Gonzalez, J. Maria Sanchez Iznaga, Cirilo Villaverde, Juan Manuel Macias, Pedro Agüero, Victoriano Arrieta, Gaspar Betancourt y Cisneros, and Cristóbal Madan, on a review of the proceedings against the accused, and a narration thereof in the Council assembled under this date, and the accused not appearing, were judged by default.

On hearing the report and opinion of the aforesaid Fiscal, and the verbal illustrations of Don Manuel Gonzalez DelValle, the Assessor of the Tribunal, the Council, taking into consideration the charges and proofs, has condemned and hereby condemns by a unanimous vote the following individuals to suffer punishment of death by garote, viz.: Ambrosio J. Gonzalez, Jose M. Sanchez Iznaga, Cirilo Villaverde, Juan Manuel Macias, Pedro Agüero; and the following shall suffer transmarine imprisonment for ten years, with a perpetual prohibition of returning to the island and to Porto Rico, namely: Victoriano Arrieta, Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros, and Cristóbal Madan, with payment of costs, and also the damages sustained by individuals and the State from the invasion of Cardenas.

COUNT OF ALCOY.

Approved, August 28, 1850.

After the formation of the Junta, applications for enlistment were received from almost every State in the Union, including California. I subjoin the answer invariably given to all, showing, conclusively, that while engaged in "promoting the political interests of Cuba," a proper regard for the laws of the country was foremost in the minds of Gen. Lopez and his associates.

SIR—Your favor of—has been duly received. I am instructed to return most cordial thanks for your offer, and to add that, while Gen. Lopez has no immediate occasion to take advantage of it, should any political movement in Cuba, such as may at any time occur, demand our presence upon that island, your co-operation, in the capacity of a free American emigrant, will be most cheerfully invoked. Your name has been registered accordingly, and the earliest possible intimation will be given to you in the event of a contingency affording the Junta an opportunity of availing itself of your friendly disposition. I am, &c.,

AMBROSIO JOSE GONZALEZ.

The establishment of a political association at the seat of Government was, in the meantime, made the subject of a correspondence between the Spanish Minister at Washington and the Secretary of State, which was published in the Washington Republic. The movement was then a political one, to the positive knowledge not merely of the men who had a hand in it, but of those who, on the death of Gen. Taylor, succeeded them in power. We shall see, presently, how it was gratuitously divested of this character by the Chief Magistrate of the Union, and how the power of Europe was invited against it, as against the deed of enemies to the human race.

In consequence of intelligence received from Cuba, General Lopez and myself left Washington for New Orleans, in the Spring of 1850, with the intention of raising an expedition from the West and South-west. The General remained in Mississippi, while I proceeded to New Orleans, where through the exertions of my friends, the Hon. John Henderson, L. J. Sigur, and others, I succeeded in forming that which is known as the Cardenas expedition. The private

means of the Cubans having been exhausted by the previous effort, necessity compelled us to resort to American generosity. About forty thousand dollars were furnished for the cause by Gen. Henderson, mostly the earnings of a life of usefulness and integrity. Bonds had been struck in New York, in the expectation of raising, among its wealthy merchants, the means for an expedition; but the class, I am sorry to say, who have lately presented a princely dagger to the black Emperor of Hayti, could not be persuaded to risk a dollar in behalf of Cuban freedom. They were given in New Orleans to our friends, who received them, I have the positive conviction, more as a testimonial of their services to the cause than with a view to sudden wealth.

The contributors to the Washington Monument cannot be said to have no admiration of the character, nor reverence for the memory of the Father of his Country, because, perchance, they receive from its committee an engraving testifying to their patriotic donation. Gen. Henderson, from the West, where he was born, rowed his passage to New Orleans in a flat-boat, and by dint of his industry and perseverance, rose to eminence at the bar, and to the honorable distinction of Senator in Congress, from his adopted State of Mississippi. Of such materials speculators cannot be made. They are more likely to be found, with less principle to palliate their actions, among the revilers of our movements. The result of the Cardenas expedition is known to the public. Among its consequences was the trial of General Henderson, by three successive juries. They were, on the first, equally divided; on the last they stood one for conviction and eleven for acquittal—a proof that extreme care had been taken to guard against any violation of the neutrality laws of 1818. In April of the following year, 1851, the third expedition, that of the *Cleopatra*, was gotten up in Georgia by the undersigned, J. L. O'Sullivan, Esq., of New York, having had charge of the purchase of the transportation, and the superintendence in that city of other elements. All the efforts of the government to convict this gentleman proved fruitless. The result of his trial again made it obvious that the law had been respected, if the wishes of the administration had not. As to myself, although I have surrendered voluntarily to the authorities of Georgia, and given bonds to the government, I am as yet untried—a sufficient vindication that the pains taken by me, in guarding against any infringement upon the statute, made the interest of Spain still more hopeless at the South. The means for this expedition were chiefly derived from Cuba, whose patriotic daughters, the women of Havana and Puerto Principe, without distinction of class or station, generously added the offering of their jewels to the contributions of their brothers and husbands. About \$12,000 of Cuban bonds were taken in Georgia, by gentlemen of the highest respectability and political position, among whom I will only mention the editor and proprietor of the leading whig organ of the State, because of the republication in that sheet of an abusive article from the *National Intelligencer*, against those whom it designated as speculators in Cuban bonds. After the discomfiture of the expedition of April, 1851, by the seizure of the *Cleopatra* in New York, I found it necessary to recruit my health, impaired by the incessant labor and anxious solicitude of the preceding months, for, under the circumstances, I was unequal to the duties of an active summer campaign, Gen. Lopez encouraged me to do so, with the understanding that I should support, with a force of from 1500 to 2000 men, the expedition which in the expectation of a rising in the island, he was preparing in New Orleans. “Curese V. con esmero,” said he, in his last letter to me; “para que vaya a apoyar a su amigo de corazon.”

After leaving, in obedience to his instructions, all the elements which I had collected in April, in the hands of one of our friends, for their furtherance to the island, as Gen. Lopez might direct, I set out for the Virginia Springs, the warrant issued for my arrest, not allowing me to visit those of Georgia. While in the mountains, the intelligence reached me of the rising of the patriots of Puerto Principe and Trinidad, the exaggerated accounts of which, published in the papers of the United States, conjointly, with the deception of Spanish agents, unquestionably precipitated the departure of the General in the steamship *Pampero*. I at once returned secretly to Georgia, where, owing to the derangements in the engine of said steamer, already returned from the island, I was sorry to find men, arms and ammunition, which, in my calculation, were then on their way to Cuba. Without interfering with that movement already in the hands of others, I at once proceeded to raise the promised reinforcement. The disastrous

news of the fate of the General, and his brave Cuban and American associates reached me in Charleston, while in the successful prosecution of this labor.

I have thus entered into details somewhat personal to me, from the necessity of answering the malignant insinuations of some of the friends of Spain in this country, who wondered, and perhaps regretted, that I and other Cubans were not included in the massacre of August, and September 1st. I will add, for the information of these gentlemen, that I was severely wounded at Cardenas, thereby claiming the honor of being the first Cuban who has ever bled in battle in the assertion of his country's rights. With the details of the Pampero expedition I am comparatively unacquainted. I am, however, convinced that the means therefor were generously furnished, mostly, if not entirely, by L. J. Sigur, Esq., of New Orleans, formerly editor of the Daily Delta, who asked nothing for a contribution which deprived him of his all, but a promise of General Lopez simply to refund it to him. Against such men the fangs of slander must file themselves. With the Pampero expedition ends the last of four efforts, made in three successive years, for the disenthralment of Cuba. If not immediately successful, they have produced one of the results anticipated by those who have, in its attainment, sacrificed position, home, and friends, and incurred the obliquy of the malignant and misinformed, to wit: The replanting of the Cuban revolution upon its native soil, where it is now rapidly advancing to a successful issue. Having run through its preparatory stage, it is to Cuba that its future ones should be looked for.

The defence of the acts of Gen. Lopez and his Cuban and American friends, would remain incomplete were I silent. 1st—On the abusive comments upon the sale of Cuban bonds; and 2nd—On the denunciation contained in Mr. Fillmore's proclamation of April, 1851. On the subject of the bonds, the National Intelligencer—an English hot-house for the exotic weed of monarchy, without whose fostering care and covert protection they could neither withstand, in republican America, the incongeniality of climate, nor resist the sturdy tramp of freemen—the paper ever to be found on the side of any interest antagonistic to the American—has been especially severe. It has called these bonds a fraud, and their purchasers speculators, while it has characterized the movement they were issued for as “a desperate enterprise.” The reader may have noticed with what comparatively small means four costly expeditions have been raised, precluding the possibility of gain by the projectors. Had they speculated by it, they would have felt inclined to establish a paper at Washington, in defence of some well-paying government, rather than risk their lives against it. Had such been the case, they would have commenced by issuing the bonds, and not by spending their own money, as they actually did, in the first and largest expedition. Then, if the enterprise was desperate, there certainly was more generosity than speculation in those Americans who furnished the means for it. If the chances for failure were as ten to one, as represented, then the bonds were really worth ten cents on the dollar, and no more. But, in the belief of the Intelligencer, there was no chance whatever. Then, even ten per cent. was a disinterested donation.

Supposing the chances to have been fair of establishing a republican government in Cuba—and this supposition could not be made without assuming, independently of circumstances favorable to the issue, that the great majority of her people were willing to throw off the yoke of Spain—then it was exceedingly proper to invite a neighboring republican people, even as they invited a distant monarchical one, to lend them their aid; and any pecuniary sacrifice of those who risked their capital in what might possibly become “desperate,” should have been amply remunerated by the country which, in the event of success, would not only have acquired the invaluable blessings of liberty, but have saved millions by the change. Money has at all times been raised in a like manner for similar or analagous purposes. Hungary issued bonds; so did Italy, and every country and people who has stood in need of it. Bonds were issued in Texas, and sold at one time as low as five cents on the dollar. This debt—strange coincidence—has been assumed by this republic. So may, probably, be at some future day, the Cuban loan. There was once a certain fund raised by certain rebels, called continental money. How much was it worth? Were not those who raised it the most moral people upon the face of the globe? Money has recently been contributed in the United States for the Irish, the Hungarians, and the Germans, to far greater extent and with far greater publicity than it has been

for Cuba; and yet, neither the leaders in the Irish movement, Kossuth, nor Kinkel, have been held to bail, insulted and persecuted as the Cubans and their friends have been. Whence this difference? The reader will readily perceive it in that which exists between an Irish and a German vote of millions and a Cuban vote of not as much as hundreds. It is also to be found in the want of equilibrium which has existed in late cabinets between Northern and Southern political influence.

I enter reluctantly into the examination of that unfortunate document, the proclamation of Mr. Fillmore in regard to the Cleopatra expedition.

An American in feeling and education, a naturalized citizen of this republic, in the folds of whose sisterly embrace I long to see my native Island, I am unwilling to show disrespect to the chief magistrate of my adopted country. But the honor of the Cuban exiles is as dear to them as Mr. Fillmore's can be to him. I have revered Mr. Fillmore for his resistance to political fanaticism; but inasmuch as in our own case he has deviated from his wonted course to pander to the feeling pervading the masses which were to greet him in Western N. York on the occasion of the great Erie Railroad celebration, I am justified in saying, that he who, if a common citizen, would have been subject to a suit for libel before a court of justice for his denunciation of our expeditions as "adventurers for plunder and robbery, which must meet with the condemnation of the civilized world," has, as President of these United States, elevated a vulgar aspersion to the magnitude of a national infiction, the shafts of which, outranging their intended mark, have sadly told against a neighboring people, and the true interests of this republic, as guarded by the policy of President Monroe, by virtually calling upon the intermeddling powers of England and France to lend their moral and physical aid in dispiriting and overawing our oppressed population, and exerting a European police in the waters of America.

It is set down, moreover, in this State paper, that these expeditions "are instigated by foreigners, who dare make our shores the scene of their guilty and hostile preparations against a friendly power, and seek, by falsehood and misrepresentation, to seduce our citizens, especially the young and inconsiderate, into their wicked schemes." Now, it happens that of the four members of the "Junta" three are Americans by education and naturalization, and the fourth is also, probably, by this time, a citizen of the United States. It is no more their fault that they have been compelled, by Spanish despotism, to seek aid in republican America, than it was Franklin's to have sought it in monarchical France. In prejudging our movement as "guilty," the Executive undertook to say what was not its province, but that of the judicial tribunals of the land to decide, after weighing the evidence; and they, at the North, the South, and the West, have uniformly given their verdict against his assertion. That "falsehood and misrepresentation" were used, is falsehood by the record. No assertion was ever made by the Cubans, connected with this movement, the truth of which they do not, at this moment, stand ready to prove.

It is the New York Express, an Administration paper,—the editor of which is a friend of the Spanish Minister—that published the famous letter from Santabuco, in the mountains of Cuba, representing the patriots as 2500 strong. It was this paper that published another letter from one of the Bahama Islands, giving false information with regard to certain American vessels seen on their way to reinforce Gen. Lopez. It was with the Tribune, Ledger, and other Administration papers most arduous in publishing those false or exaggerated accounts from the Island, which contributed, with the perfidious statements of Spanish emissaries, to precipitate the departure of the too confiding Lopez, and caused him to land where he could be most speedily annihilated. If "falsehood and misrepresentation" had been used, the men who enlisted for the first would not have joined in the second expedition; those who fought and bled at Cardenas would not, after going through so many perils and hardships, have volunteered to fight and bleed again at Las Pozas and Cafetal de Frias, and on their return from their captivity in Spain, would not have publicly expressed their willingness to embark anew, if necessary, in the service of the same cause. If "falsehood and misrepresentation" had been used, and if full confidence in our integrity did not exist, neither Henderson and Sigur, who have been impoverished by their generosity, nor the persons who contributed in Georgia to the Cleopatra expedition, would have remained ever since the steadfast friends of ourselves and our cause, ready to

serve it again with unabated interest. The American character is too enlightened in its nature and too just in its purpose, to be obscured by misrepresentation, private or official, or to be turned, by political leaders, from its conception of right. Finally, if "falsehood and misrepresentation" had been used, would the authors of it have risked their lives or even surrendered them, as Lopez and scores of Cubans did, upon the same field and scaffold as their generous associates? It is, indeed, impossible, to read this proclamation without being forcibly reminded of that all-pervading political calumny, so justly deprecated by General Cass during his late speech in the Senate. If any of our agents in this country (and of this fact we are not aware) have appealed in any instance to the grosser senses of the people, in order to induce them to join our movements, such action has been wholly unauthorized. It is the weak point in secret expeditions that the leaders thereof have to rely entirely upon the moral character of those whom, in some instances, they necessarily employ on a very short acquaintance—deprived, as they are of the means of coercion and repression, which an organized government commands. How much more excusable should any irregularity be, under such circumstances, than the frauds and the plunder but too often perpetrated upon the people by members of the latter?

The character of our transactions has been sufficiently established by the facts which I have mentioned in connection with Gen. Worth and the expedition of 1849, and by the very sentence of the Spanish Government, in which death is visited upon us, not for "robbery or plunder," but for "creating at New York a club under the title of 'Junta for Promoting the Political Interests of Cuba,' with the object of diffusing"—reads the sentence—"in this Island and Porto Rico, their insidious and avowed purpose of subverting public tranquillity, and for being engaged and occupied in conspiring against the legitimate Government of her Majesty." It has been established by the history of the events of 1850 and 1851, pending which, both at Cardenas and Las Pozas, the persons and property of the inhabitants were respected and protected, as became the friends of the people. Guards were placed at Cardenas at the doors of jewelers, to protect them from any irruption of the populace; and no reward would the officers accept for what they justly deemed the performance of their duty. Nothing was used, not even wine, that was not paid for. The negroes even, who coaled the Creole, were paid for their work. It was established by the magnanimous conduct of Gen. Lopez in setting free while still in sight of Cuba, Gov. Ceruti, a relation of Count Alcoy, and the officers of the Spanish garrison of Cardenas, on the simple condition that they should protect the lives of such of our men as had imprudently remained at Cardenas, as well as in providing, in the United States, for fourteen months, for the subsistence and welfare of the privates of the Spanish garrison who joined him at that place.

The contrast between General Lopez and his antagonists may be drawn from the fact that the four Americans taken at Cardenas were, notwithstanding the promise of the liberated governor, inhumanly put to death,—among them, a lad of fifteen. It was so well established in the last expedition that a Spaniard went from Vuelta Abajo to Havana, to beg the Captain-General for the lives of some of the captives, in consideration of the humane and generous treatment of his family. But were all these proofs wanting, and had not the expeditionists been for the most part men of standing and respectable families in the United States, and were not Americans well acquainted with the disaffection,—nay, the inveterate and implacable enmity to Spain which pervades the length and breadth of Cuba—common sense, no greater than falls to the lot of the dullest savage, would convince any one that a force of four or five hundred men would not venture itself upon an island occupied by a million of souls, and garrisoned by 20,000 regulars and 4000 drilled militia, with the object of "plunder and robbery"—nay, without the most positive conviction, ill-founded, if you like it, but sincere and evident as light, that they would be joined by the people they came among; and this very just presumption assumes the proportions of a certainty, when, as in the case of General Lopez, they send back their transports, and trust to Providence and a principle for life and success. It was reserved for Americans of the nineteenth century,—for the Government of a people that is to regenerate the world,—to represent as criminal and abominable what ancient and modern history has recorded as praiseworthy. Thrasybulus immortalized himself by leading an expedition against the thirty tyrants of Athens, and Aratus and Pelopidas encircled their brows with kindred laurels. Gen. Pepe has in our own time attempted the overthrow of despotism in Italy,—Mina, in Mexico,—Mi-

randa, in Colombia, with the connivance of Madison and the material aid of Great Britain.

So much for liberty!

On the other hand, Flores once attempted to subvert, with the aid of Spain and England, the self-given government of a republican country, and is at this moment on his second effort to establish therein one more congenial to those two powers. Barradas led against Tampico an expedition raised in Cuba by the Spanish Government, and paid for by exactions upon our own people. Louis Napoleon, the protector of Cuba to Spain, invaded by Strasburg, the France which he now rules, and from the shores of England conducted the paltry expedition which resulted in what goes by the name of the *echaufforee de Boulogne*; and yet it does not appear that these men, who have conducted "hostile" expeditions against "friendly powers" for their ambitious ends, and not for the welfare of the people, have so far met with such a "condemnation of the civilized world," as to be stigmatized as pirates and buccaneers. That Gen. Lopez was unsuccessful, should be no reproach either to himself or to the people of Cuba—it was merely the result of circumstances. Bolivar made several trials before he established liberty in Colombia, and Bruce made nine attempts for the independence of Scotland. The great Napoleon himself, who, from Elba landed three hundred men in France, and promptly seized the reins of government, was, with same intellect, and when at the head of half a million of the best troops the world has ever seen, defeated in Russia by the premature fall of the thermometer and the torch of an incendiary. Gen. Lopez's movement upon Cardenas was a judicious one. He meant, by a coup de main, to surprise that place in the dead of night; take immediately the railroad to Matanzas, only thirty miles distant; seize that important city in the same manner; and with the aggregation of thousands of our people, who would have joined him there, fall back upon the interior and wait for the Spaniards, in case he should not have felt justified in marching against the capital. The government could not, at that time, dispose of more than two thousand men as a column of operations, without ungarrisoning the most important points and giving them to the people. But our boat was taken to the wrong wharf, and having run aground before reaching it, our landing, instead of being instantaneous, was delayed for more than an hour. The alarm was given, preparations were made for defence, and the town had to be taken by force and at great sacrifice of life. Intelligence was sent by couriers to Matanzas, and the main object of the enterprise, the surprise of the latter was rendered impossible. On leaving Cardenes the Creole grounded again in her shallow harbor. In order to lighten her, most of our ammunition and part of our provisions were thrown overboard, and even part of our force had to be landed on a key, when all other expedients had proved unavailing, which so discouraged our troops that they refused to land again, and compelled Gen. Lopez to take them into Key West. When the General started from New Orleans on his last attempt, he is believed to have done so with the intention of touching at Jacksonville, in eastern Florida, take the artillery, arms, and ammunition which I had concentrated there for that purpose, and then land on the eastern province of Cuba. Had he by this movement placed himself far from the focus of Concha's resources, and in the midst of a district and population every way favorable to the desired result, he would not only have given the Spaniards blows which they could not well retrieve, but would have been enabled to sustain himself sufficiently long to allow thousands of men arming in several parts of the Union to go to his support. But, deceived by exaggerated reports from the island, by the misinformed correspondents of American newspapers, and, above all, by emissaries of the Spanish government, among whom are said to have been some infamous Cubans—the Arnolds of our time—he abandoned this wise course, and when at Key West, steered directly across to Vuelta Abajo. The anxious wish of the wily Concha was thus accomplished. He had, as he expected, Gen. Lopez at Bahia Honda—only thirty-eight miles from Havana, and a point upon which he could, at the shortest notice, pour by sea and by land, through the war and coasting steamers, and sailing vessels, and the San Antonio railroad, almost the whole garrison of Havana, in addition to the two thousand soldiers ordered to march upon him from Pinar del Rio, the capital of Vuelta Abajo. Even the ferry boats of the harbor, such is the favorable state of the weather at that season—were available as transports for the Spanish troops. The immense force employed against him may be deduced from the fact that out of a garrison of over seven thousand men stationed at Havana, only six hundred are said to

have been present at the funeral of Gen. Enna. It was palpable that Gen. Lopez had been foully decoyed. Too great a confidence in others, the result of his generous nature, was alike fatal to him and to the success of his expedition. Never counting the enemies he had before him, he never suspected those whom he could not see. His own prowess, and that of the heroic band of Americans and Cubans who fought by him were unavailing. Surrounded on all sides, and completely intercepted from the Creoles, the victories of Las Pozas and Cafetal de Frias, by which he placed hors de combat a number of the enemy four times as great as his entire force—by thinning his ranks without the possibility of obtaining reinforcements from the country—could be productive of no good results. In those gallant struggles fell Gen. Pragay, the distinguished Hungarian, who commanded the left wing of the garrison of Comorn during its memorable sally upon the Austrians; Col. Downman, head of the American infantry under Gen. Lopez; Felipe Gotay, the Alvarado of the expedition, a Creole commanding an American company; Oberto, a Cuban captain of the Cuban company; Planos, aid to the commander-in-chief; and scores of courageous foreigners and natives, at the same time that Crittenden and his fifty victims to Spanish ferocity surrendered up their souls upon the brow of the hill of Atares, that their earthly remains might be mangled and desecrated by a Spanish rabble. The total want of information with regard to the movements of Gen. Lopez, convinced the Creoles in the country and at Havana, at the very time of his victories over the Spaniards, that the rumors of his utter destruction, circulated by the latter, were entitled to credit. The execution at Havana, of Crittenden and his party, but served to confirm them in this belief. In spite of these adverse circumstances, it is estimated that one hundred and sixty Cubans were shot on the roads, in their blind attempt to join the liberating forces wherever they might be met. The rage of the elements completed the disastrous issue. Out of ninety-five muskets left them, only four or five were serviceable after the gale, which at this juncture, swept over Vuelto Abajo. Gen. Lopez then urged the shattered remnant of his Spartan band to seek the clemency of the Captain-General, while he, sure of his fate, but determined to meet it, surrendered, not to a Cuban, thank God, as has been falsely represented, but to Castaneda, a native of Palma, one of the Canary Islands—a man whom he is said to have generously saved from the galleys, when president of the comision militar, and who repaid his kindness by hunting him down with bloodhounds. The last words of this great and good man were prophetic, and expressive of his love of country: “My fate will not change thy destinies; adieu, dear Cuba.” A monument to his memory, testifying to future generations of the nobleness of his deeds will, with the certainty of Divine justice, be erected, ere many years elapse, upon the scene of his heroic martyrdom.

In the foregoing brief review and examination of Cuban affairs, the following points would appear to be clearly established:

1. That Cuba suffers unparalleled oppression.
2. That she has an undeniable right to revolt.
3. That her people have done towards effecting it much of what they possibly could do.
4. That our movements originated in Cuba.
5. That it was the fault of Spanish despotism that the nucleus of our revolution was ejected from the island, and compelled to prosper in the United States.
6. That the first and largest expedition was raised entirely with Cuban money.
7. That it received the countenance of very high officials.
8. That Cuba had a right to aid from the people of the United States.
9. That such aid has been sought by the representatives of a respectable political party.
10. That it was granted by Americans of the highest honor and principle.
11. That our movements are proven, on Spanish official authority known to the government, to have been purely political.
12. That the assertions contained in Mr. Fillmore's proclamation are, for this reason, worse than gratuitous.
13. That the judicial tribunals of the land have, in every instance, given their verdict to this effect.
14. That the measures pursued for the raising of means are the same as those adopted by all other people under the same circumstances.

15. That movements similar to ours have received the sanction of history.

16. That it was merely the result of circumstances that Gen. Lopez was not supported by the Cubans.

17. That the Cuban revolution has been, by our efforts, replanted upon its native soil, where it now progresses.

18. That consequently, we have a claim to the support of public opinion, and to the aid of the American people, and the moral countenance of their government in any future struggle with the tyranny of Spain.

How this aid is to be granted by either, it would be presumptuous for me to dictate. The people have the strict construction of the statute for their chart. Their government has for its guide the policy of President Monroe, the true interests of America, and its duties to humanity, in whose behalf it has become the most potent and visible agent of the Almighty. In the hands, then, of a free and generous people, and to the wisdom of a prospective liberal American administration, as to the instrument of a just and retributive Providence, we should be willing to commend the cause of our own dear land.

AMBROSIO JOSE GONZALEZ.

Warrenton Springs, Va., Sep. 1, 1852.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 003 061 183 4